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INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA  
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DEPARTMENT FOR DS/IP/AF, DS/TIA/ITA, DS/IP/SPC/SO, INR,  
AF/E, LONDON AND PARIS FOR AFRICA WATCHERS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/03/2028

TAGS: [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [PGOV](#) [ER](#) [DJ](#)

SUBJECT: ERITREAN GOVERNMENT FEARS OF AL QAEDA POTENTIAL IN  
DJIBOUTI

Classified By: Ambassador Ronald K. McMullen for Reason 1.4 (d)

11. (S/NF) Eritrean Minister of Defense Sebhat Ephrem told the French ambassador he was concerned about the possibility that Al Qaeda could establish a presence in Djibouti. He cited five factors he thought made Djibouti vulnerable to Islamist extremism: 1) Djibouti's proximity to Yemen; 2) its large foreign, particularly Arab, population; 3) high level of corruption among government officials; 4) the presence of two foreign military powers; and 5) the highly skewed income disparity. The French Ambassador relayed this information to RSO at the October 31 European Union contingency planning meeting. At this same meeting, a representative from the French Service de Securite Interieure, who is based in Djibouti, told RSO the Djiboutian government was concerned about the possibility of terrorist attacks occurring in Djibouti, but did not provide any additional information.

12. (S/NF) Comment: Despite increased reports of the Eritrean government providing material support to Al-Shabaab in Somalia, the Eritrean government fears the possibility of Islamic extremism in Eritrea and the threat it would pose to the Isaias regime.

MCMULLEN